

## Feed Your Mind

Stress can dramatically impact the mind resulting in afflictions such as insomnia, depression, social withdrawal, and increased aggression. Several methods of combating stress in this regard include:

### Journaling

Take time to write out your thoughts and feelings towards stressful or traumatic events during the day as if you were in a psychiatrist consultation. Journaling enables one to release emotions and better comprehend a stressful situation by forcing the mind to translate thoughts onto paper.

### Positive Self Talk

Self-talk is the internal dialogue one has throughout the day but which seems to grow louder and more unavoidable during times of stress. By observing the nature of these comments and making a conscious effort to give positive affirmations, self-talk enables one to essentially reprogram their thinking to have a more positive attitude. Some of the direct benefits include increased productivity and self-esteem that result from the serenity that accompanies a positive attitude.

### Reframing

It's all about perspective. Reframing is a mental exercise in which one consciously alters unhealthy thought patterns by putting a positive spin on the cause of an unpleasant thought (ie: stressful situation):

- View a task not as a problem but a challenge to overcome
- Assume the boss isn't micro-managing but instead being attentive to detail
- Ask yourself what is the worse that could happen?

The goal is to stay calm and not get frazzled. Reframing enhances ones' ability to remain in a calm state of mind, which results in a greater likelihood for the desired outcome, and prevents the adverse health effects associated with stress. Helpful hint: if having difficulty separating from a current state of mind, think of a famous character or respected person and envision how they would approach the situation.



## Sources

### Mind

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### Specific Pages:

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### Body

- Developed with funding from the IBM Global Work/Life Fund.
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### Heart

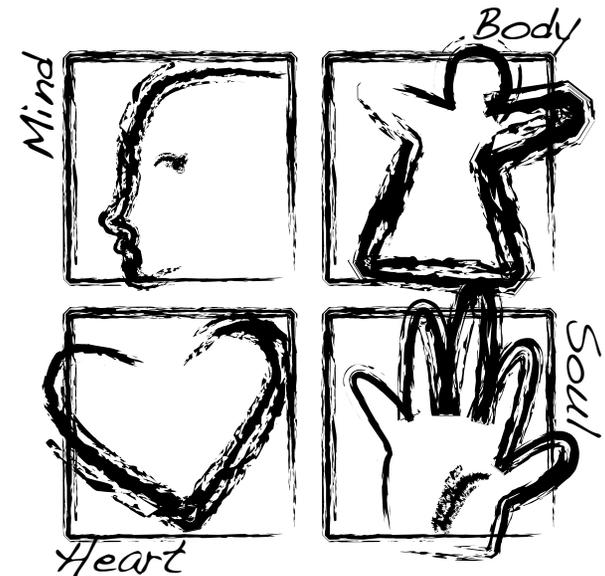
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### Soul

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# Reducing Workplace Stress

*A Practical Guide for the Busy Body*



## Move that Body!

### How Does Exercise Reduce Stress?

Exercise returns your body to its normal equilibrium by releasing natural chemicals that build up during the stress response.

### Types of Exercise

- Aerobic or Cardiovascular Exercises
- Stretching/Flexibility
- Toning/Strengthening
- Breathing

Activities include yoga, tai chi, Qi gong, and repetitive exercises (e.g. walking, jogging, rowing, biking, swimming)

### Quick Wins for the Body

1. Practice deep breathing
2. Do slow neck rolls. Close your eyes, and gently tilt your head from side to side
3. Tighten, and then loosen, the muscles in your hands. Clench your hands up tightly, and hold this position for a second, then release your muscles
4. Get up, go outside, and take a quick walk
5. Keep a small stress ball with you and toss the ball from one hand to the other for a few minutes or squeeze the ball a few times



## Healing the Heart

### Relationships

The people you surround yourself with can make a huge impact on the way you see the world and the way you interact with it. Your personal relationships can also help relieve the stress from the daily grind.

- Keep up with your friends
- Let go of unhealthy relationships
- Meet new people with an open mind

### Altruism (Volunteering)

DEFINITION: Doing good deeds without seeking merit or rewards

Another great way to relieve stress is to help others. Helping others can foster a better outlook and perspective on life. Volunteering takes the focus off of you and shifts the focus to the needs of others.

- Volunteer in your community
- Be a mentor

Many places could benefit from your help – hospitals, schools, parks, and many more! Contact your employer for corporate-sponsored events.

### Volunteer Opportunities:

Bay Area Volunteer Opportunities Hotlist  
<http://www.volunteerinfo.org/hotlist.htm>

### Habitat for Humanity

<http://www.habitat.org/cd/local/>

### Big Brothers Big Sisters

<http://www.bbbs.org/>

## Soul Talk

### Contemplation

DEFINITION: concentration on spiritual things as a form of private devotion

#### BENEFITS

1. Increased closeness with the universe, God or a higher power
2. Creation of a spirit of tranquility in your soul

#### METHODS

##### 1. At Home

- Find a comfortable position, as not to encourage sleep
- Select a motivational reading, scripture or poem
- Close your eyes and silently repeat the sacred word or phrase
- As your mind wanders, bring it back to focus on the sacred word or phrase

##### 2. At work

- Reserve 20 minutes on your schedule to sit outside or in a special and comfortable space
- Leave for work 20 minutes early and drive to a nearby restful place (parks, building of worship)
- Carry books such as “Don’t sweat the small stuff – at work” or a collection of Chinese proverbs so you are prepared to practice when time permits

### Meditation

DEFINITION: relaxing with sustained concentration

#### BENEFITS

1. Give the body time to relax and recuperate
2. Clear away hormones that build up through the day and provide many other positive health benefits
3. Overall anxiety reduction

#### METHODS OF MEDITATION:

1. Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) is used to relax muscles when they are tense
  - Activity: Tense your right foot muscle for a few seconds, then release and relax. Repeat with each other muscle of the body up to your facial muscles. Do at your office desk.
2. Mindful Concentration is used to clear the mind of clutter and distraction
  - Focus on an object-desk lamp, coffee mug, etc.
  - Focus on a sound or chant-om
  - Using imagery go to your “Happy Place”
  - Mindful eating your lunch meal-savor every bite

